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among whom they live. Their aspirations are all towards 797
acquiring the advantages open to an educated Chinese, and
which are not denied to a Min Chia who has the same
standard of education. Consequently no political advantage
is thought to accrue from becoming a Christian, and some
social disabilities undoubtedly do exist. Missionaries fre- 797
quently refer to the persecution which converts have to 798
undergo, and the expression is strictly correct if it is
understood as a covert enmity and family disapproval.
There is no organised or systematic persecution by the
authorities, who, indeed, are bound in law to toleration.
Nor is there a ferocious anti-Christian sentiment among the
people such as makes any conversion of a Moslem to
Christianity almost a sentence of death in many parts of the
world.

Persecution in Yunnan means cold looks and unfriendly
remarks ; family pressure upon the convert ; perhaps the
loss of a position with a house of business or a school. It is
in no sense a general hostility felt and expressed by all the
community. Nevertheless, there is enough ill-will to
prevent many faint-hearted people from professing what
they would like to believe, and the embarrassing relation-
ship with an unconverted family restrains others. The
Christian convert must withdraw himself from the worship
of ancestors, and as has been shown in earlier chapters this
means that he must cut himself off from the intimate
ceremonies and holidays of the home. The Min Chia home
is also the temple of ancestral worship, and each member
of the family has a part to play in the rites. It would be
easy for the convert to cease to frequent Buddhist shrines
or the temples of other gods, but he cannot avoid the
ceremonies of Ancestor Worship which take place every
day in his own home.

A junior member of the family may find this atmosphere

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797 so difficult that he will prefer to emigrate to some other
798 place where he will not be under family pressure, but when the head of the family is converted it often leads to a real breach, since other members refuse to permit the worship of the ancestors to cease, and the only solution is to divide the home. Perhaps for this reason conversions are usually confined to members of less importance, students far from home, old women whose rôle in the family is of minor importance, or young girls who will in any case soon marry into another family. Much pressure is exerted on young women who become converts as it is felt that their attitude may be displeasing to the family into which they are betrothed, while they themselves are often unwilling to marry non-Christians. These family difficulties account for a large part of such hostility as is generally felt to Christianity, for older people often fear that such complications will disturb the arrangements they have made.

797 The influence of missionaries resident in the country is thus perhaps more indirect than direct. The Christian community is small, and in spite of the fact that several of the highest Chinese National leaders are Christians, there is in Yunnan no general movement towards the western religion.[1] As members of those western nations who are most strongly influencing the Chinese culture, the missionaries by their way of life as much or more than by their teachings are exerting an increasing influence on the standard of living adopted by the wealthier class. This influence is the more important as they are the only foreigners of any race who come in contact with the Min Chia people. Those members of the non-Chinese races

[1] The Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, General Feng Yu-hsiang, Mr. Sun Fo, Mr. T. V. Soong, Madame H. H. Kung, wife of the Finance Minister and sister of Mesdames Chiang and Sun Yat-sen, and others, all Protestants.